

state, individuals who are well respected in their various fields Cal Solem from the contractors, individuals who understand what the City of Omaha needs in the way to move forward to bring new business, to attract the kind of tourism, to attract the kind of conventions that will be necessary to allow us to compete with our neighbors like Des Moines, like Kansas City, like Denver, like Sioux Falls, those folks who are out there competing for the convention dollar. Now granted, we like having an arena that is available to us that we can use, but I believe that we have the ability at this point in time to say, we can probably do both, but what has to be first and foremost I believe is the convention center. What has to take place is the City of Omaha has to say, sure, this is a priority for us. The problem with the vote was the vote was merely on a half cent sales tax for the renovation. It was not a choice of options and I believe that if you were to give the same voters a choice of options they would say, sure, we would like to see a convention center as one of the highest priorities and I know Senator Ashford agrees with this. We don't disagree on this issue and I don't disagree with him necessarily as it relates to making an investment in downtown Omaha. I firmly believe that is where we should be looking at developing these kinds of opportunities for the city. Some of the things that haven't been addressed in terms of the 16, 15 to \$16 million that will be invested in the Civic Auditorium are things like what are we going to do there? We have seen a newspaper story for the most part in terms of what will transpire in terms of the renovation. What about things like asbestos abatement, those kind of things that cost in the millions of dollars when you're looking at a facility the size of the Civic Auditorium? Are those going to be addressed with these monies? What kind of structural improvements, if any, or are we merely looking at the makeover, if you will, of this facility and I would argue that's exactly what we're doing. We're going to make it the street appeal that much better, but bottom line when you get inside you're still going to have the same facility that has been there for 45 years. You are not changing that. And is that money that is well spent? Are those \$16 million being well spent and I would argue they are not. I would argue they are \$16 million that are being basically poured down the drain and at this point in time what we need to do is we need to invest that kind of money...

SENATOR MOORE: One minute, Senator Hall.

SENATOR HALL: ...which you are not going to be able to go back